

**REMARKS**

Claims 1-15 are pending in the present application. Claims 1, 6 and 11 are independent. Reconsideration in view of the following remarks is kindly requested.

**The Section 112 Rejections**

Claims 1, 6 and 11 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112 as allegedly failing to comply with the written description requirement.

Without admitting or denying the substance of these rejections, Applicants have amended claims 1, 6 and 11. Applicants believe their amendments renders these rejections moot.

**The Section 102 Rejections**

Claims 1, 4-6, 9-11, 14 and 15 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being allegedly anticipated by Fee et al., U.S. Patent 5, 726,788, (hereinafter “Fee”). Applicants disagree and traverse these rejections.

Applicants respectfully submit that Fee fails to teach or suggest a connection device that comprises an optical switch for receiving optical signals to connect at least one processing unit to one or more received signals based on a characteristic of each signal.

In contrast, it appears Fee only discloses the routing of an optical signal to any one of so-called “functions f1-f7” for processing, without regards to the characteristic of the signal.

Because Fee does not teach each and every feature of the claimed inventions, Fee cannot provide a basis for a rejection under 35 U.S.C. §102. Reconsideration, withdrawal of the rejections and allowance of claims 1, 4-6 and 9-11 is respectfully requested.

**The Section 103 Rejections**

Claims 2, 7 and 12 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Fee in view of Wong et al., US Patent 6,624,927 (hereinafter “Wong”). Claims 3, 8 and 13 were

rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Fee in view of Sharma et al. US Patent 6,331,906 (hereinafter "Sharma"). Applicants respectfully disagree and traverse these rejections.

Claims 2-3, 7-8 and 12-13 are allowable at least because these claims depend from allowable claims 1, 6 and 11 for the reasons set forth above as well as on their own merits.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the pending rejections and allowance of claims 2, 3, 7, 8, 12 and 13.

Should there be any outstanding matters that need to be resolved in the present application, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact John E. Curtin at the telephone number of the undersigned below.

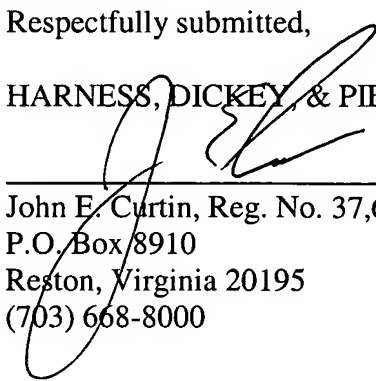
In the event this Response does not place the present application in condition for allowance, applicant requests the Examiner to contact the undersigned at (703) 668-8000 to schedule a personal interview.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 08-0750 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. § 1.16 or under 37 C.F.R. § 1.17; particularly, extension of time fees.

Respectfully submitted,

HARNESS, DICKEY, & PIERCE, P.L.C.

By

  
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John E. Curtin, Reg. No. 37,602  
P.O. Box 8910  
Reston, Virginia 20195  
(703) 668-8000

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